

Santa Monica Democratic Club Resolution Regarding High Quality Indoor Air in SMMUSD Schools

WHEREAS in furtherance of the California Democratic Party's support of a safe, healthy and excellent public school education for all children, AB 2232 was introduced by CA Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D) and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 29, 2022, and provides, among other things, that (1) "it is the policy of this state that school facilities be designed and operated using available measures to provide a healthy indoor environment for students, teachers, and other occupants including, but not limited to, healthy indoor air quality and adequate ventilation with outdoor air" and (2) schools install filtration that achieves MERV levels of 13 or higher when feasible; and

WHEREAS AB 841 was authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D) and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 30, 2020, and established School Energy Efficiency Stimulus Program, which is comprised of 2 grant programs, one of which (referred to as the California Schools Healthy Air, Plumbing, and Efficiency Program or CalSHAPE) authorized funding to school districts for assessing, maintaining, and repairing or upgrading school ventilation systems, including replacing filters (using MERV-13 filtration when feasible); and

WHEREAS (1) MERV-13 or higher filtration is highly recommended by the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH), Department of Education, CDC, EPA, ASHRAE, and National Air Filtration Association, among others, with ASHRAE recommending MERV-14 or higher, (2) the CDPH recommends ventilation with a clean air change rate per hour (eACH) of 6 to 12, and (3) studies have shown that high quality indoor air in schools decreases absenteeism, increases student, teacher and staff productivity, improves the health of students, teachers and staff, and improves student performance and outcomes; and

WHEREAS after more than 2 years of using MERV-13 filtration to keep our schools healthy and safe, prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year, Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) enacted a policy to remove all MERV-13 filters from its classrooms and replace them with inferior MERV-8 or at best MERV-11 filters, citing negative impact on the HVAC systems; and on October 24, 2023, SMMUSD applied for the Assessment and Maintenance Grant ("A&M Grant") under the Ventilation Program of CalSHAPE and on November 8, 2023, SMMUSD received a Notice of Proposed Award of \$1.61 Million.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Monica Democratic Club requests that SMMUSD (1) immediately initiate the third party assessment of all HVAC units under the A&M Grant, (2) expeditiously complete all aspect of the A&M Grant in accordance with the requirements of CalSHAPE, and take all steps necessary to qualify and submit a complete and accurate application for the Upgrade and Repair grant under CalSHAPE by May 31, 2024, (3) promptly pursue any and all funding under CalSHAPE and other available grants that, where feasible, will lead to the reinstatement of MERV-13 or higher filtration in all of its schools, ensure ventilation rates in schools achieve 6 to 12 air changes per hour (ACH), add portable air purifiers to classrooms and other areas where students, teachers and staff gather, when needed, and install HVAC units designed for, and capable of properly functioning with, MERV-13 or higher filtration when any HVAC unit is replaced or newly installed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be sent immediately to the SMMUSD School Board (brd@smmusd.org) and SMMUSD Superintendent Antonio Shelton (ashelton@smmusd.org).

Cc: California State Senator Ben Allen, California Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur, California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

Submitted by: Santa Monica Democratic Club

Original Resolution Authored by: DeAnne Ozaki, Member, Santa Monica Democratic Club

Revisions by the Club Membership